UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM I AND UNAVEM II)

UNAVEM I

Background

The deployment of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I) in January 1989 came about following a complex international diplomatic process which culminated in agreements on both the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), leading to the independence of Namibia, and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The agreements - a tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa and a bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba - were signed at a ceremony at United Nations Headquarters on 22 December 1988. In the bilateral agreement, Angola and Cuba agreed upon a timetable for the staged and total withdrawal of the 50,000 Cuban troops which were then in Angola.

Establishment of UNAVEM I

On 17 December 1988, prior to, but contingent upon, the signature of the two agreements described above, Cuba and Angola requested the Secretary-General to recommend to the Security Council the establishment of a United Nations military observer group to verify the two countries' compliance with the bilateral agreement. On 20 December, by resolution 626 (1988), the Security Council decided to establish UNAVEM for a period of 31 months, i.e. until one month after the planned completion of the withdrawal of Cuban troops on 1 July 1991. The arrangements concerning UNAVEM I came into effect on 22 December 1988 when the tripartite and bilateral agreements were signed.

Verification of Withdrawal

UNAVEM I became operational on 3 January 1989 when an advance party of 18 military observers arrived in Luanda to verify the departure on 10 January of the first 450 Cuban soldiers. Thereafter the strength of the Mission rose to 70 military observers. Military observer teams verified and recorded all movements of Cuban military personnel and equipment into and out of Angola, in particular in the ports of Cabinda, Lobito, Luanda and Namibe and Luanda airport. UNAVEM I's mobile teams also confirmed Cuban redeployment, in accordance with the agreed plan, northwards from all locations south of the adjusted 13th parallel. After the completion of this redeployment from the southern part of Angola, the observer strength was reduced to 60.

On 22 May 1991, the Secretary-General was notified of the decision taken by the Governments of Angola and Cuba to complete the withdrawal more than one month before the scheduled date. Consequently, on 25 May, UNAVEM I witnessed the ceremony to mark the completion of the withdrawal from Angola of all Cuban troops and concomitant military equipment. On 6 June 1991, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that UNAVEM I had carried out, fully and effectively, the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council in its resolution 626 (1988).

UNAVEM II

Background

Meanwhile, on 17 May 1991, the Government of Angola requested the Secretary-General to ensure the participation of the United Nations in verifying the implementation of the Peace Accords for Angola, initialled by the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) on 1 May 1991, and consequently to prolong UNAVEM's presence in Angola. The Accords had resulted from a process of negotiations that had taken place between the two Angolan delegations, with the mediation of the Government of Portugal and with the participation

of observers from the Soviet Union and the United States. A *de facto* suspension of hostilities came into effect on 15 May.

Establishment of UNAVEM II

On 20 May 1991, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a report recommending that the verification tasks attributed to the United Nations in the Peace Accords be entrusted to UNAVEM and that the Mission's mandate should be prolonged accordingly. On 30 May, the Council adopted its resolution 696 (1991) entrusting a new mandate to UNAVEM (thereafter UNAVEM II) and establishing the Mission for a period of 17 months, until after the general elections to be held in Angola in the fall of 1992. After the Peace Accords had been duly signed on 31 May, the Secretary-General immediately took steps to implement the new mandate entrusted to UNAVEM II.

Arrangements for the Cease-fire

In accordance with the Peace Accords for Angola, a Joint Political-Military Commission (CCPM) was established in June 1991, composed of representatives of the Angolan Government and of UNITA, as members, and of representatives of Portugal, the Soviet Union (now Russian Federation) and the United States, as observers. A representative of the United Nations is invited to the meetings of the Commission.

Also a Joint Verification and Monitoring Commission (CMVF) was formed with the same composition as CCPM. A representative of the United Nations participates on a regular basis in its meetings. CMVF is responsible for ensuring the effective observance of the cease-fire and reports to CCPM.

In addition, a Joint Commission on the Formation of the Angolan Armed Forces (CCFA) and a Political Commission have been set up, as well as several working groups. These groups deal with demobilization, demining, police, humanitarian aid, extension of central administration, financial and other matters.

Pursuant to the Accords, CMVF has established monitoring groups composed, in equal numbers, of representatives of the Armed Forces of the Angolan Government and of UNITA. These groups are unarmed and are responsible for monitoring *in situ* the observance of the cease-fire, including the prevention, verification and investigation of possible violations of the cease-fire. The monitoring groups are organized in six regions and are being deployed at several dozen locations (assembly areas) where the troops of the two sides are assembled during the cease-fire.

UNAVEM II Mandate and Method of Operation

The mandate of UNAVEM II is, in general terms, to verify the arrangements agreed by the Angolan parties for the monitoring of the cease-fire and for the monitoring of the Angolan police during the cease-fire period, as set out in the Peace Accords for Angola.

The United Nations verification operation began as soon as the Angolan Peace Accords were formally signed on 31 May 1991. Advance parties of observers were deployed to the field on 2 June 1991.

Currently, UNAVEM II teams of unarmed military observers are deployed at some 46 assembly areas, as well as at several "critical points" (certain sea ports, airports and border posts). In essence, their task is to verify that the joint monitoring groups, established by CMVF, are assuming their responsibilities. Working closely with these monitoring groups, UNAVEM II verification teams provide support in the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the cease-fire. If necessary, they respond to requests for assistance and use their good offices to resolve problems that might arise within these groups. In addition, UNAVEM II has taken the initiative in monitoring some aspects of the Accords, such as the regular counting of troops and weapons in the assembly areas; and monitoring of unassembled troops, demobilized troops, and troops selected to join the new Angolan Armed Forces.

The neutrality of the Angolan police is to be verified by monitoring teams also composed of members designated by the Government of Angola and by UNITA. Their work is verified by UNAVEM II police observers, who are deployed in all of Angola's 18 provinces. The monitoring teams and UNAVEM observers are to visit police facilities, examine activities of the police and, if necessary, investigate alleged violations of political rights. The first police monitoring teams were finally established in all Angolan provinces only in June 1992 although United Nations civilian police observers were present in the designated areas by October 1991.

On several occasions the United Nations conveyed to the two sides suggestions to overcome difficulties related to the assembly and the demobilization of troops, proper custody of weapons, the monitoring of the police, as well as to other matters relating to the peace process. At the request of the two parties, the United Nations launched an emergency food programme to relieve the shortage of food in the assembly areas.

Initially, UNAVEM II's authorized strength was 350 military observers and 90 police observers provided by Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, India, Ireland, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. In May 1992, the Secretary-General recommended, and the Security Council agreed, to increase the police strength of the Mission from 90 to 126 officers. There were also a civilian air unit and a medical unit, as well as international and local civilian staff. Major-General Edward U. Unimna (Nigeria) is the Chief Military Observer of UNAVEM II.

Enlargement of UNAVEM II's Mandate

The Peace Accords for Angola provided for "free and fair elections for a new Government" under "the supervision of international election observers". On 5 December 1991, the Secretary-General received two letters dated 8 November, signed by the Minister for External Relations of Angola. One of the letters contained a request for United Nations technical assistance to help the Angolan Government to prepare for and conduct the forthcoming elections. The other letter contained a formal request to the Secretary-General to send United Nations observers to follow the Angolan electoral procedure until its completion in the fall of 1992. It was later announced that elections would be held on 29 and 30 September 1992.

An agreement on technical assistance was signed with the Angolan Government in January 1992. As regards United Nations observation of the first-ever elections in Angola, the Secretary-General informed the Security Council on 20 December 1991 that he intended to recommend that the Council authorize such a mission. On 6 February 1992, the Secretary-General informed the Council of his decision to appoint Miss Margaret Joan Anstee (United Kingdom) as his Special Representative to coordinate the current and projected activities of the United Nations in connection with the Angola Peace Accords, and as the Chief of UNAVEM II. On 3 March, following the Special Representative's visit to Angola, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council his report with recommendations concerning the United Nations role in observing the forthcoming elections. On 24 March, the Security Council, by its resolution 747 (1992), decided to enlarge UNAVEM II's mandate to include election observation in Angola.

Observation of Elections

In March 1992, the office of the Special Representative was established in Luanda, the capital of Angola, to coordinate all United Nations activities related to the Angolan peace process. In addition to its deployed military and police observers and civilian staff, UNAVEM II has been enlarged to include an Electoral Division, headed by a Chief Electoral Officer with five international staff and the requisite local staff at headquarters in Luanda. Offices of the Electoral Division have been established in the six Angolan regions and in the capitals of all 18 provinces of the country. They are collocated with the teams of the military component of UNAVEM II. Approximately 100 international staff and the requisite number of local staff .were mandated for the regional and provincial electoral offices.

The United Nations role is to observe and verify the elections, not to organize them. The mission is an operation limited in scale, similar in approach to the United Nations Observer Mission for the Verification of the Elections in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) in August 1989 - February 1990 and the United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH) in October 1990 - January 1991. The terms of reference are as follows:

- to verify the impartiality of the electoral authorities in all aspects and stages of the electoral process;

- to verify that political parties and forces, as well as individuals and groups, enjoy complete freedom of organization, movement, assembly and expression, without hindrance or intimidation;

- to verify that all political parties and forces have access to State radio and television, and that there is fairness in the allocation of both the timing and the length of broadcasts. The use of other public resources for electoral purposes is also to be the subject of observation and possible recommendations by the electoral mission;

- to verify that the electoral polls are properly drawn, and that qualified voters are not denied registration and the right to vote;

- to report to the electoral authorities on complaints, irregularities and interferences reported or observed and, if necessary, to request the electoral authorities to take action to resolve and rectify such complaints, irregularities and interferences;

- to observe all activities related to the registration of voters, the organization of the poll, the electoral campaign, the poll itself and the counting, computation and announcement of the results.

The whole electoral process is to be organized by the National Electoral Council with technical assistance provided by experts and consultants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Three main phases of the electoral process are foreseen: the registration of voters from 20 May to 31 July 1992; the electoral campaign; and the presidential and legislative elections at the end of September 1992.

The UNAVEM II electoral observers, during all three phases, will monitor and evaluate the operations and impartiality of the electoral authorities at all levels. UNAVEM II will similarly evaluate the fairness of all significant decisions of the electoral authorities and will investigate disputed actions taken by them. The provincial teams will have regular contact with political parties and social organizations. They will visit municipalities and villages throughout the country; monitor registration by making random visits to key centres; observe important political rallies and other political activities; and verify compliance by all parties with the electoral law and with the code of conduct. The mechanisms through which broadcasting time is allotted to the different parties will also be observed and the content of information broadcasts and the fairness of tariffs will be analysed. UNAVEM II will also evaluate complaints received about the use of public resources as well as making its own observations. These activities will make an important contribution to confidence-building and will be accompanied by public information programmes. It is expected that over 95 per cent of the municipalities and main population centres will be visited at least once by UNAVEM II teams and, for the more populated areas, there will be several visits.

During the polling itself, the Electoral Division will field about 200 observation teams of two people each, i.e. a total of 400 people. These teams will have full access to monitor all stages of the poll, and would develop a projection of results for internal purposes. These 400 personnel will consist of the approximately 100 observers coming from existing staff of UNAVEM II; about 100 additional observers to be selected from UNDP and other United Nations agency personnel in Angola, plus volunteers from selected non-governmental organizations; about 100 additional observers from the United Nations Secretariat; and a further 100 contributed by Member States.

Other Aspects

The Special Representative has also been coordinating United Nations action on other matters that are outside the mandate of UNAVEM II but vital to the success of the peace process. These include food, health, training and other humanitarian aid to assembled and demobilized troops, as well as to about 800,000 displaced people, 50,000 abandoned children and 40,000 people mutilated by war; action by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assist in the return and resettlement of more than 300,000 Angolan refugees from Zaire and Zambia; release of military and civilian prisoners through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and other tasks. Another of her major roles has been to coordinate assistance from donor countries to the Angolan Government to help to organize the electoral process. The Special Representative has acted as a catalyst in several conferences organized at Luanda for this purpose.

A "Daunting Challenge"

In his March 1992 report to the Security Council, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed out that the election monitoring in Angola would be a "daunting challenge, given the devastated condition of the country, the almost total lack of the infrastructure that will be necessary for the electoral process, and the major political, logistical and administrative uncertainties now evident. The efforts that will have to be undertaken, above all by the Angolan people themselves, in the organization for their first free and fair elections, which are an essential precondition for peace and political stability, deserve the support not only of the United Nations, but also of all those concerned with the future of Angola."

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